

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3665

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2098

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, DR

SUBJ: COMMENTS ON GOVERNMENT CHANGES

REF: SD 2075

1. MOST SIGNIFICANT OF MAY 7 CHANGES OF GOVT PERSONNEL WAS DESIGNATION OF MAJOR GENERAL NEIT NIVAR SEIJAS AS CHIEF OF NATIONAL POLICE. NIVAR'S INFLUENCE HAD BEEN UNINTERRUPTED DECLINE SINCE HE WAS REMOVED FROM SAME POSITION IN 1972 AND THE FORTUNES OF HIS LONGTIME RIVAL, MAJOR GENERAL ENRIQUE PEREZ Y PEREZ, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, ROEU STEADILY DURING THAT TIME. NIVAR'S REAPPOINTMENT TO ONE OF MOST POWER-LADEN POSTIONS OPEN TO MILITARY WILL RESTORE POWER BALANCE WITHIN SECURITY FORCES.

2. MOVE CAUGHT EVERYONE, INCLUDING PRESS, POLITICIANS AND MILITARY BY SURPRISE AND DEMONSTRATED NOT ONLY PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S ABILITY TO KEEP HIS PLANS SECRET FROM HIS CLOSEST COLLABORATORS BUT ALSO HIS BOLDNESS IN MAKING IMPORTANT REASSIGNMENTS OF MILITARY LEADERS. (THERE WERE THOSE WHO BELIEVED THAT PEREZ Y PEREZ AND HIS SUPPORTERS AND ALLIES WERE IN SUCH ASCENDANCY THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE UNABLE TO MAKE A SHIFT OF PERSONNEL DISTASTEFUL--AS THIS ONE HAS BEEN--TO THE GENERAL.)

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3. APPOINTMENT OF DR GUIDO D'ALESSANDRO AS SECRETARY OF STATE OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY WAS NEXT MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE. PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO SOCIAL CRISTIANO (PRSC) OF WHICH D'ALESSANDRO HAS LONG BEEN ACTIVE MEMBER, NOW HOLDS TWO KEY ECONOMIC POSITIONS IN ADMINISTRATION. (OTHER IS TECHNICAL SECRETARY OF PRESIDENCY HELD BY ALFONSO LOCKWARD.) PRSC LEADERS HAVE BEEN MEETING WITH "PROGRESSIVE" GOVT OFFICIALS, MOST OF THEM MEMBERS OF THE PARTIDO REFORMISTA (PR), TO TRY TO RATIONALIZE THE GOVT'S ECONOMIC PLANNING. PRSFZLEADERS HAVE TOLD EMB THAT PRESIDENT IS AWARE THAT PR IS PARTY WITHOUT A BASE AMONG "MASSES" AND WELCOMES PRSC AS CONTRIBUTOR TO BROADENING POLITICAL BASE. PARTY PROPOSES TO WORK WITHIN GOVT, GAIN EXPERIENCE, MAKE CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY'S WELFARE AND STRENGTHEN ITSELF ALL AT THE SAME TIME. THEN IF PRESIDENT DOES NOT STEP DOWN IN 1978, PRSC WILL BE BETTER PLACED TO GO INTO ELECTIONS.

4. OTHER CHANGES ARE LESS SIGNIFICANT. GUZMAN ACOSTA GOES TO FORESTRY FOR SECOND TIME AND LEAVES GENERALLY GOOD RECORD IN POLICE. VILLANUEVA'S MOVE FROM COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY TO NIVAR'S OLD JOB IN PRESIDENCY FOLLOWS HIS DO-NOTHING PERFORMANCE AT COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AND CONFIRMS FACT THAT NEW POSTION IS UNDEMANDING. GIL MANUEL FERNANDEZ IS CONSERVATIVE LANDOWNER WHO WILL HAVE UPHILL FIGHT TO CONVINCE PEOPLE HE BELIEVES IN AGRARIAN REFORM. DOMINGO MERCEDES IS PRESIDENT OF NEW TRUJILLISTA ORGAN MOVIMIENTO NACIONAL PROGRESISTA. LEAVING HIM WITHOUT ASSIGNMENT MAY BE INDICATION OF PRESIDENT'S DISPLEASURE WITH RADHAMES TRUJILLO'S EFFORTS TO RETURN TO DR AT HEAD OF A POLITICAL PARTY.
HURWITCH

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